REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 4, 2005 (Paper No./Mail Date 20051023), the Examiner objects to a substitute specification filed on August 15, 2005 by Applicants, as allegedly lacking formalities. Applicants respectfully request entry of the substitute specification as filed on August 15, 2005, and reconsideration of the Examiner's objection. To the best of Applicants' knowledge and belief, no new matter has been introduced in said substitute specification. The substitute specification was submitted to incorporate changes as requested by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed on May 3, 2004 (Paper No. 9).

In the Office Action dated November 4, 2005, the Examiner rejects claims 1 through 10, 14 through 26, 29 through 38, 40 through 51, and 53 through 69 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,943 to Bull, et al. ("Bull") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,601,100 to Lee, et al. ("Lee"). The Examiner further rejects claims 11 through 13, 27, 28, 39 through 40 and 52 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Bull in view of Lee and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,345,289 to Lotspiech, et al. ("Lotspiech").

Bull discusses an information aggregation and synthesization system. A user logs into the system of Bull using a name, address, or with some pseudonym (or some combination). Col. 3, lns. 34-35. This allows the user's activity to be tracked during the current session, whereby data passing between a network interface device and datastore is accessed, polled and retrieved through an intermediary gateway system. Abstract; col. 3, lns. 35-37. All user access to information is through the system. Col. 3, lns. 49-50. User access information is analyzed for patterns, preferences and trends, which are used to

annotate or update a user profile. Col 4, lns. 40-42. The system of Bull utilizes information in the profile to customize nominated searches to the individual desires of the user. Col. 4, lns. 43-45.

On the basis of the foregoing, Bull discusses six aspects of the information and aggregation system. Col. 4, lns 45-46. Two aspects are URL munging, which allows content from and access to multiple merchants to be aggregated, synthesized and accessed at a single web site, and WWW CD-Rom, which allows a user of a search engine to select references to be included in a custom CD. Col. 4, ln. 47 –col, 5, ln. 9. Other aspects include software agent advertising insertion (when a pattern is seen is a user's web activity, advertising insertion is activated to display a particular advertisement (Col. 5, lns. 10-25)), automated profile generation on the basis of monitored search patterns (Col. 5, lns. 26-47, automated lead generation (Col. 5, lns. 48-57) and software agent unmet needs generation (construction of complex software text search agent to monitor additions to the system (Col. 5, ln. 58 – col. 6, ln. 19).

Lee discusses a computer system and method for collecting, analyzing, aggregating, and storing information about the content of one or more web pages served by a server over the network. Abstract; col. 3, lns. 50-53. A server process receives one or more requests for one or more web pages and produces each requested web page. Col. 3, lns. 59-65. The web pages have one or more content elements in addition to one or more metadata entries, which are tags in a meta language that categorize the content elements of the web page. Col. 4, lns. 1-5. The server executes a logger process that stores the metadata entries contained in each of the web pages in one or more of the metadata fields. Col. 4, lns12-14. The logger process that the sever executes also stores a requester identification

that is associated with the requester in the requester field of the record associated with the respective web page. Col. 4, lns. 15-18.

The system of independent claim 1, by contrast, describes a system for estimating the prevalence of digital content on a network. The system of claim 1 comprises an estimating device that receives traffic data collected from the network and an anonymizing device that locates user identification data in the traffic data, masks the user identification data to produce clean traffic data, and stores the clean traffic data. A sampling device stores summarization data that describes each occurrence of the digital content in the clean traffic data and an accessing device presents the clean traffic data and the summarization data to a user.

Bull and Lee, both alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest an anonymizing device that locates user identification data in the traffic data, masks the user identification data to produce clean traffic data, and stores the clean traffic data. Indeed, the descriptions that Bull and Lee provide, both alone or in combination, teach away from an anonymizing device as claimed. Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the passages cited from Bull do not discuss locating user identification in the traffic to mask the user identification as a "pseudonym." Instead, Bull discusses the use of a name or pseudonym to log into the system such that the system may identify the user and any traffic he or she generates. Bull is silent regarding the location of user identification data in the traffic data, which as claimed is masked to produce clean traffic data, because the provision of a name or pseudonym in Bull allows the system to associate traffic with the user, not mask user identities. Applicants respectfully assert that the Examiner is associating the use of the term pseudonym in Bull with the masking of data. According to Bull, however, the pseudonym

is used in conjunction with or as an alternative to a user name to associate requests with users, not to mask data.

Lee similarly fails to teach or suggest an anonymizing device as claimed. Applicants respectfully assert that the Examiner is misinterpreting the discussion of Lee that states "the logger process may remove the metadata from the web page, so that the server process send to the requester only the web pages without its metadata." Col. 6, lns. 22-23. As Lee discusses, metadata are tags in a meta language that categorize the content elements of the web page. Col. 4, lns. 1-5. The removal or inclusion of such metadata, however, is irrelevant to the location of user identification data in the traffic data, the masking of the user identification data to produce clean traffic data, and storage of the clean traffic data. Furthermore, the passages cited by he Examiner directly teach away from the anonymizing device as claimed. Specifically, Lee states, "In one preferred embodiment, the requestor field [in a log entry] contains information to identify and classify the user making the request." Col. 7, lns. 7-8.

Bull or Lee, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the advantageous combination as claimed by independent claim 1. Independent claim 1 is, therefore, not obvious over or in view of the references cited by the Examiner and reconsideration is respectfully requested. A substantially similar element to the anonymizing device in independent claim 1, cast as a system element, method step, means element or computer code, is claimed by independent claims 6, 7, 25, 37, 48, 50, 53, 55, 60, 65. Applicants respectfully assert that these independent claims are allowable over the prior art for at least the reasons presented in connection with independent claim 1 and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims of the present application contain additional features that further substantially distinguish the invention of the present application over Bull, Lee and the other prior art of record. Given the applicants' position on the patentability of the independent claims, however, it is not deemed necessary at this point to delineate such distinctions.

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 through 69 are believed to be in order, and a timely Notice of Allowance to this effect is respectfully requested. To expedite prosecution of this application to allowance, the examiner is invited to call the applicants' undersigned representative to discuss any issues relating to this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Formicola — May 4, 2006 (Date)